

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a public facility in communication with at least one patron through a virtual ticket device (VTD) interface, a method of doing business, comprising:

detecting that a VTD is within communication range of the VTD interface; determining the identity and location of the detected VTD; and selectively providing information to the identified VTD on the basis of the determined identity and location.

2. The method of doing business of claim 1, wherein the information provided to the VTD includes a description of the determined location.

3. The method of doing business of claim 1, wherein the public facility maintains a database of estimated waiting times at selected facilities, and wherein the information provided to the VTD includes information relating the estimated waiting time for at least one facility.

4. The method of doing business of claim 3, wherein the request transmitted from the VTD includes a maximum-wait time, and further comprising the step of determining whether the estimated waiting time at the at least one facility is less than the maximum-wait time, and wherein the information relating to the estimated waiting

6 time is sent upon determining that the estimated waiting time is
7 less than the maximum-wait time.

1 5. The method of doing business of claim 3 wherein the facility is
2 a public toilet.

1 6. The method of doing business of claim 3 wherein the facility is
2 a concession stand.

1 7. The method of doing business of claim 6 further comprising the
2 step of claim 6 further comprising the steps of allowing discounts
3 when a holder of the VTD makes purchases at the concession stand and
4 communicating information about the allowed discount to the VTD

1 8. The method of doing business of claim 3 wherein the facility
2 is an aid station.

1 9. The method of doing business of claim 1, further comprising the
2 step of storing in memory the determined VTD identity and location.

1 10. The method of doing business of claim 9, further comprising the
2 steps of:

3 determining that the VTD has passed an entry point at the
4 public facility;

5 determining subsequently that the VTD has passed an entry point
6 of the public facility for at least a second time; and
7 providing automatically to the VTD information including a
8 description of the stored location.

1 11. The method of doing business of claim 10, wherein a plurality
2 of VTD locations have been stored, and wherein the description
3 automatically provided describes the first stored VTD location.

1 13.² In a public facility including a transceiver for communicating
2 with virtual ticket devices, said facility having at least one
3 status collector, a method of doing business, comprising:
4 providing a database in communication with the status collector
5 for storing collected status information;
6 receiving status information for storage in the database;
7 receiving a request for status information; and
8 transmitting the requested status information to at least one
9 VTD.

1 14. The method of doing business of claim 13, wherein the request
2 for status information is received from a VTD.

1 15. The method of doing business of claim 13, wherein the request
2 for status information is generated automatically.

1 15. The method of doing business of claim 14, wherein the
2 automatically-generated request is generated upon determining that
3 the VTD has relocated from a first location to a second location.

1 16. The method of doing business of claim 15, wherein the
2 automatically-generated request is generated upon determining that
3 an event taking place in the public facility has ended.

1 17. The method of doing business of claim 13, wherein the status
2 collector measures the rate at which vehicles are leaving a parking
3 area associated with the public facility.

1 18. A public-facility information guide, comprising:
2 an electronic ticket control system for processing public-
3 facility information in order to formulate information messages;
4 at least one access point in communication with the electronic
5 ticket control system, the access point being capable of
6 communicating with a public-facility patron virtual ticket device;
7 and
8 at least one status collector in communication with the
9 electronic ticket control system for collecting and reporting status
10 information.

1 19. The information guide of claim 18, wherein the status collector
2 collects crowd-density information.

1 20. The information guide of claim 18, wherein the status
2 collector collects waiting time information.

1 20. An electronic ticket control system, comprising:

2 a message database for storing information-message data;

3 a control program for directing a processor of the electronic
4 ticket control system to formulate an information message using the
5 information message data, wherein the information messages are
6 formulated in response to information requests;

7 an access point coupled to transmit information messages
8 formulated by the processor to a public-facility patron virtual
9 ticket device; and

10 a status database for storing status information collected by a
11 status collector, wherein the processor uses the stored status
12 information in formulating information messages.